



Family Guide to Adoption Selection Interview Process

Overview: Adoption placement decisions are made by an adoption selection process. The Adoption Selection Committee, which is tasked with making the final adoption placement decision, is made up of Department of Human Service (DHS) professionals. These professionals are brought together to review the child(ren)'s needs and the family's abilities to meet those needs, to make the best adoption match available and to ensure compliance with applicable adoption laws. The process has four components including the following: 1) Guiding Principles, 2) Engagement and input from parties, including the child and family, 3) an Adoption Selection Committee, and 4) a placement decision and related notifications.

Adoption Selection Staffing Process Guiding Principles: The Guiding principles are DHS' values and are intended to be instructive to the Adoption Selection Committee, and are as follows:

- The Adoptive Selection Staffing Process will value the best interest of the child above all else.
- The adoptive family selected for a child or sibling group must be based on a thorough assessment of each child's current and potential developmental, medical, emotional, educational needs.
- The child's need for family connections will be valued.
- Separation of siblings should be avoided. When separation is necessary to protect the well-being of one or more children in the sibling group, all reasonable efforts must be made to maintain contact between siblings.
- The adoptive family selected will be able to nurture and accept the child as a fully integrated member of the family

The Adoption Selection Interview: The interview is for the DHS to meet with all prospective families to explore whether the family is the best family for this child. Components of the interview are as follows:

- Confidentiality expectations will be discussed. The Statement of Confidentiality for Adoption Selection Participants, must be signed by all participants.
- A brief overview of the child will be provided. The presentation may include the child's legal status and a clear, but concise description of the child's condition, including any changes or updates since the child's Social History was completed. The child's desires in an adoptive family should be noted if applicable. Any special requirements established for the child by the child's court status should be discussed.

- Families will be asked questions regarding their current situation and motivation to adopt. Below is a list of categories and questions which may be asked in the adoption selection interview process:

1) Caregiver(s) Information

- a) Family Background: Questions could include: Where is your birthplace (city and state), who is your family of origin (names, ages and current location) to include parents, siblings. Describe the quality of relationships between family members (past and present).
- b) Self-Awareness: Questions could include: How would you describe yourself? Who would you talk to about your fears and worries regarding adoption? Do you feel you are prepared for the responsibility of adopting? What are your family's interests, hobbies?
- c) Physical and Behavioral Health: Questions could include: Describe the overall physical health of you and your family members. Any substance use (alcohol and non-prescribed drug use) by each family member to include substance of choice, frequency of consumption. Do you have any concerns about your physical ability to provide care for a child? Is anyone in the family currently receiving treatment for a major mental health disorder? Describe any history of domestic violence. Are there any domestic violence or relationship issues that could pose a threat to the stability/safety of the child(ren) being adopted?
- d) Employment, Education and Military: Questions could include: What is the highest level of education/grade level you completed? Who is your employer; length of time with employer, nature of work, # of hours worked each week and work schedule.
- e) Criminal History and Law Enforcement Contact: Questions could include: What were the circumstances surrounding records found on background checks.
- f) Adoption Motivation: Questions could include: How did you first become interested in adoption in general? How do you see adoption changing your life? Impact on day-to-day changes and through the lifetime of changes (lifelong commitment). Do you feel pressured to adopt? Do you plan to continue to foster or adopt more children?
- g) Adoption Preparation: Questions could include: What education have you received about adoption? What specifically have you learned or feel is important to learn? How will you continue to learn about adoption issues? What are some of the differences in needs between an adopted child and biological child? How has the child been prepared for adoption? How do you think the child feels about being adopted? Do you feel fully prepared to parent this child forever? How are you prepared to handle child's needs now and understanding of those needs changing in the future? Are you financially able to care for the child if adoption assistance from the state is not available?
- h) Openness: Questions could include: What is your definition of openness? Describe willingness/feelings about being open with birth families. Current relationship with birth family, and attitude towards them. How will the relationships look after adoption? What is your plan to problem solve challenges that could arise with the birth family relationships? Does this child have biological or other legal siblings? How will you prioritize the child's connections

with siblings? If no biological family connections, what do you plan to do to try to promote contact? How will you handle birth family connections when the birth family struggles with maintaining contact or birth family choices are negative?

2) Support System Current and Post Adoption

- a) Informal Support: Questions could include: Knowledge and support of adoption plans. Describe the child's relationships with these sources of support. Whom do you turn to when you are having difficulties with parenting? Other informal supports? Religious Institution? How do sources of support help you? Will these supports give you a break and help care for the child? Who will become this child's legal guardian or parent in case of death or inability to parent?
- b) Formal Resources and Supports: Questions could include Access to therapy, support groups, ongoing education plans? Respite, if formal respite is needed who gives you a break from providing care to the child? Post adoption support plans? Are you aware of adoption resources locally and nationally?

3) Parenting Philosophy: Questions could include:

- a.) What are the rules for children in the home? Are there different rules for different children? Do you consider the child's trauma background when setting rules? Have you had to change rules based off needs of the children? (give examples)
- b.) What are the expectations of the children? About education, career, attitude, behaviors, gratitude (will it be expected for the child to be grateful they were adopted)?
- c.) What does discipline look like in your home? Are there different interventions/techniques for different children? Will this change post adoption? How will this change over the years? Are you open to trying new interventions/approaches/techniques?

Post Adoption Selection Interview:

After the interview is completed, families will be provided information of timeframes as to when and how each family will be notified of the selection decision. Consideration will be given to what is involved in making the final decision and approximately how long it will be before the decision is made.